

OPEN SPACE

newsletter



A Quarterly Newsletter of the Open Space Division and the Open Space Alliance

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New Open Space Division Acquisitions!

On March 18, 2021, the City celebrated the purchase of the Poole property for \$6.7 million, a 23 acres parcel directly adjacent to the San Antonio Oxbow on Albuquerque’s west side. This significant acquisition was the result of a grassroots citizen effort to deter the proposed development on the property that was slated to be a subdivision for 69 homes. City, County and State officials came together to secure funding for the property in record time.

This property is one of a few remaining undeveloped parcels of this size directly abutting the Rio Grande Bosque on the west side between I-40 and Alameda. Additionally, the Poole property provides grassland and salt brush habitat that enhances and buffers the San Antonio Oxbow wetlands. It is also adjacent to the San Antonio Overlook off Namaste Rd. that offers stunning views of the Oxbow, Rio Grande and Sandia Mountains.



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Open Space Acquisitions



Tijeras Arroyo

The Open Space Division is pleased to announce three new acquisitions in the Tijeras Arroyo/Manzano area since the beginning of 2020 totaling over 100 acres. Most of these parcels were identified as priorities in the Tijeras Arroyo Biological Zone. In 2007, Open Space developed the Tijeras Arroyo Biological Zone Resource Management Plan, intended to protect natural and cultural resources and wildlife habitat in the largest arroyo in the city. Readers may recall that two additional properties were purchased in this Bio Zone in 2018 as well. The OSD is excited to continue working to protect the important resources in this area, and thank our crew for their tireless work building and moving fences! An additional purchase is a smaller parcel that bridges the gap between the Route 66 and Manzano/Four Hills Open Spaces, providing the opportunity for one contiguous trail network and wildlife corridor.

Anyone interested in learning more about the important of protecting the Tijeras Arroyo Biological Zone can find the updated 2014 plan on our website at cabq.gov/openspace.



Welcome New Employees

Jessica Sapunar-Jursich, the new OSD Education Supervisor is pleased to be returning home to Open Space where she began her career in environmental education nearly 20 years ago as a UNM work study student and then as a City intern.

She later went on to serve as the Interpretive Park Ranger at the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park where she did similar work with a focus on the Rio Grande riparian ecosystem. Jessica experienced Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Threatened and Endangered Species field working as a technician for one season. Sieving mud pools for an endangered species in a nearly dry riverbed was a humbling experience.

Then, her journey took her to the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science, first responsible for early childhood, youth, and family programs, and then later as the Director of Education overseeing all aspects of museum-based, state-wide outreach, and Sandia Mountain Natural History Center educational programs.

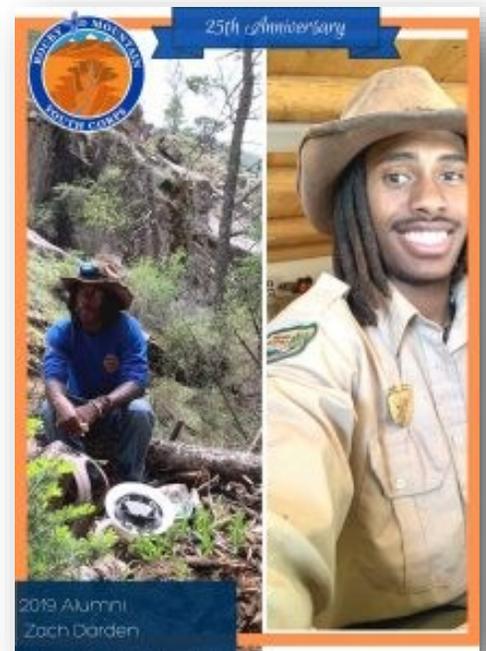
Jessica has a Master's in Parks, Recreation & Environmental Education, and her Bachelors Degree in Natural Resources Management, both from UNM. She completed a Graduate program in Curriculum and instructional Leadership from College of Santa Fe and earned her New Mexico K-8 Elementary Teaching license to enhance and connect environmental education curriculum more effectively to schools. Jessica is honored to be a part of the Open Space team and looks forward to grand adventures as we all navigate these uncharted times. She bids Happy trails to everyone. May your paths cross soon!



Zachary Darden, Park Attendant

Zach is originally from Indianapolis, Indiana, but has spent a good portion of his life in New Mexico. Zach has been working in the conservation field for 3 years and prior to joining Open Space worked with the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps where he worked his way up to supervisor and spent a season building trail at the John A. Milne – Gutierrez Canyon Open Space.

He has also been an outdoor educator, taking young people on wilderness treks for an organization called Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions. This experience led him to the Open Space Division where he began working as a temporary employee. Zach is in the process of finishing his bachelor's degree in geology and would like to use his degree and outdoor experience to help the Open Space Division accomplish its goals and mission. When not at work, Zach enjoys hitting the trails on his dirt bike (where it is allowed) and also enjoys scuba diving, in which he obtained his lifetime scuba certification. Zach is also in the process of building an off the grid, solar cabin so he can be more environmentally friendly, not only in his work, but also in his home life. Zach considers it a great pleasure to be working with “this great organization” and he can't wait to see what the future holds for Albuquerque's Open Space!



Covid Thoughts or the Clichés of our Times

In these odd times all the clichés prevail: It's the light at the end of the tunnel; It was the best of times and the worst of times; We're all in this together...

A lot can be said about this past year and the times we're currently surviving through; all of the above and more. For many 2020 was a year where most wouldn't mind the door hitting it as it closed. For others it was the beginning of new habits and possibilities. In this note, we're aiming more for the latter although not forgetting the first part. Many around me and those that I meet on the trails have Covid Fatigue, wanting...no, aching for moments of normalcy.

For those people I'll add the grandfatherly cliché that you all soon will be espousing "Back in the day, I remember when...". In these occasionally harshest of times many people found or rediscovered the joys and recuperative powers of nature as is proven with our visitation numbers doubling when this first broke out last March and then settling to more than a third above our largest previous yearly numbers in all Open Space areas. This could be "the best of times" as many have now regularly escaped their enclosures, exploring to reclaim areas that are old favorites or newly discovered outlets of relief from isolation. All the wonders of the simplest things; birds singing, the snap of fresh air, the crunch of gravel, leaves or snow underfoot, and wildlife; what more needs to be said. Everything is refreshed and enhanced if you slow down enough and take the time to soak it all in. "Always just remember to breathe." Patience is still the key to get us to that stated "end of the tunnel" but we can't do it alone. "We're all in this together" so practice courtesy and consideration for others on the trails by taking on a common sense measure in mask use – wearing a properly fitted mask especially when others come near or when you enter areas such as trailheads or parking areas.

This is a State mandate which is enforced by fines of \$100, which is the thing we hope none of you ever face so hang in there and we'll get through this quagmire of stress. The general spin is if you wear a mask throughout your workout you'll maximize its effect and be able to do half the work with greater gain as it's like adding an extra thousand feet of elevation, the general purpose most professionals train here. I'll close this down with one of my favorite statements: Everything will be all right in the end and if it's not alright, then it must not be the end. Be well and stay safe. We're almost there.

Bill Pentler

Adopt an Open Space

As an extension of the Trail Watch Volunteer program, the Adopt-an-Open Space program was formed to concentrate stewardship in a targeted area. TWV duties are applied, but adopters also agree to organize at least one group project per year. Some areas may require more scheduled projects within a year. In the foothills, individuals or groups can adopt trails and assist with the essential maintenance of these visitor corridors. In the Bosque, groups of 10 or more can adopt restoration areas and help with non-native plant control and trail maintenance. At the City's expense, a sign is installed in the adopted area recognizing the adopters efforts. To inquire about adopting an OSD trail or area please contact Dionne L. Epps at (505) 768-4960 (**New Number**) or depps@cabq.gov

Trail Watch Trainings

Trail Watch Volunteers are the foundation of the volunteer program. Trail Watch is ideal for those volunteers who enjoy using the trails. These volunteers patrol areas of their choice and record observations, report problems and needs, and educate the public on proper resource use. For now, during COVID the trainings will be virtual.



OSVC Front Desk Training

OSVC Front desk volunteers are the first impression of the Open Space Visitor Center. Of course the task of answering the phones are incorporated in the two hour shift duties, but greeting visitors who come from all over the world in hope of finding a great hiking trail is apart of those duties. If you are not familiar with the History of Open Space Division your training will be helpful. If you are looking for a beautiful place to spend a few hours a week greeting people, try one of the upcoming trainings.



Traditional Garden Volunteers Needed

The Open Space Visitor Center Traditional Gardeners enjoy their time at the garden quietly surrounded by nature nestled in a quaint, tranquil area near the Bosque trails. Kept in a Ancestral, Native New Mexican way. The Visitor Center uses it as an educational tool for visitors to explore.

If you enjoy submerging your hands in soil to connect with mother nature then we have a place for you. Come spend a little time in our gardens to assist in cultivating and preserving some of the original ways of this land we would love to have you come join us at one of our meetings. They are held the 2nd Thursday of every month .



To Register for any of the above programs, please call (505) 768-4960 .

'Twas the Night Before Trails Day (A Visit from El Duende)

A poem by Open Space Staff written on May 31, 2019
(The day before National Trails Day)

'Twas the night before Trails Day and all through the
park

Not a creature was stirring, not even a hawk;
The pin flags were set upside down with care
In hopes that El Duende would soon be there;

The volunteers were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of raffle prizes danced in their heads;
Then up at dawn with my uniform and cap,
I felt like I had but only a nap,

When at the Elena there rose such a clatter,
I sprang from the booth to see what was the matter.
Away to the trail I flew like a bird,
To see what had made the noise that I heard.

The sun was rising and so was the heat,
I knew by the end of the day I'd be beat,
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But El Duende and one hundred and fifteen volunteers!

A strange little creature, mischievous and friendly,
I knew in a moment it must be El Duende.
More rapid than eagles his crew leaders came,
And he whistled and shouted and called them by name;

"Now John and Jonathan, Kyle and Bill!
Tricia, Joshua, Jodi and Jim
On Dionne, on James, Daniel and Charlie
Matthew, Mike and the whole Shackley family!"
To the Trails!" he called
Now build away, build away, build away all!"

Like grains of sand before the west wind fly,
When they blow through Montessa and blot out the
sky,

So up to their projects the crew leaders flew,
With wheel barrows of tools and El Duende too.

And then in a twinkling, I heard so loud
The scraping of a Pulaski and a McLeod.
As I picked up a tool, and was turning around,
Down the trail El Duende came with a bound.

He was dressed in green with a khaki shirt,
And his clothes were covered in dust and dirt;
Bundles of tools he had in piles,
And he looked like he was ready to hike for miles.

His eyes how they darted! And oh what ears!
His nose had a point just like a spear's!
His droll little mouth was drawn up in a smile,
And the beard on his chin hadn't been groomed in a
while;

The handle of a Pulaski held tight in his hand,
And the dust from his digging encircled the land;
He had a broad face and a smile so gentle,
He laughed as he gave me a bag full of lentils.

He was short and lean, a right sprightly old gnome,
And for a moment I thought I should have stayed home;
A wink of his eye and the promise of beer,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to fear;

He spoke not a word, and then built a drain dip,
And filled in all the ruts; then paused for a sip,
And laying his finger aside his chin beard,
And giving a nod, for the end had neared;

He sprang to his trail and gave his team a cheer,
And away he went to buy them all beer.
I heard him exclaim, ere he hiked out of sight,

**HAPPY TRAILS DAY TO ALL, AND TO ALL A
GOOD-NIGHT!**



A Special “Thank You” to Richard and Colleen Shackley

At the beginning of the pandemic Richard and Colleen recognized the increased trail use and decided to assist the Open Space Division in being apart of educating trail users. This was done by cultivating visitors on the importance of trail etiquette and encouraging the use of masks while on the trails.

They both continued to display selfless acts of additional volunteerism throughout the 2020 pandemic. Not only did they represent Open Space, but, they represented the city as volunteers and environmental education extraordinaire' s.

They made Open Space Division masks for volunteers and staff. The two spent **229.96 hours** of (Trail Presence hours) during one of the City's and country's most difficult times. The dynamic duo encountered **12, 666 visitors** with their environmental nurturing aesthetic gives our city great hopes to engage more volunteers and trail users .

Thank you , Richard and Colleen. The OSD Division and Parks & Recreation Department sincerely appreciates you.



Photo Credit by:

Colleen Shackley



Photo Credit: Bill Pentler

It is with a sad and heavy heart that the Open Space Division family has lost one of our own volunteers and an avid Open Space Supporter.

Joanie A Swanson, born Mary Joan Atchison (82) passed away peacefully on January 14, 2021. Born on September 30, 1938, she is survived by her loving husband of 53 years, Gerry Swanson, her sons Kent R. Swanson and Scott D. Swanson, grandson Emiliano Swanson-Iglesias, brother Tom Atchison, and stepparents Edna and O'Neal Weigelt.

Joanie was a generous person, wife, mother and volunteer. She and her husband would often be found hiking some of their favorite Open Space trails and participating in all major clean-ups. With her adventurous spirit Joanie had an endless curiosity about the world. She was an international hiker, Nordic Ski Racer and long distance bicyclist. She and her husband were enthusiastic collectors of folk art and contemporary art from New Mexico, Old Mexico, and around the world.

Joanie had the gift of telling stories, but the best thing about her stories is that they were all true. She would talk about her many travels and could make you seem as if you were experiencing her memories through her eyes.

She demonstrated that community and family are the keys to living a full-filled life. Joanie will be missed and remembered by all that had the pleasure to meeting her.



Photo Credit: Bill Pentler

El Duende Onion

Mustatawney Mel Makes his Prediction!

Socially distanced crowds gathered at beautiful Montessa Park on Tuesday, February 2nd to watch Mustatawney Mel, the Open Space Muskrat make his prediction for either an early spring or six more weeks of winter. As Mel emerged from his subterranean quarters he yawned, stretched, scratched himself, had a cup of coffee, and did not see his shadow, thus predicting an early spring. He also went on to predict that Tom Brady and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers would win the Super Bowl.



Local guest contributor to your most reliable source of fake Open Space news

Meanwhile Albuquerque Al, the Elena Gallegos Pocket Gopher, made his prediction and agrees with Mel, that Albuquerque will have an early spring! Al's prediction method is simple, if Al's handler Park Attendant, Enoch Volden, reaches into the hole to pull Al out and gets bitten by fleas and comes down with Bubonic Plague then Albuquerque will experience 6 more weeks of winter and 6 weeks of pestilence. However, if Enoch doesn't get the Plague (or come down with some other disease) then we will be in for an early spring.

As if COVID 19 wasn't Bad Enough!

Local inventor Herman Van Tooten, son of local mad scientist, Ethan Van Tooten, was trying to apply his father's cloning techniques in an effort to help the Biopark's endangered giant panda (*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*) reproduce. The cloning experiment started off promising, but then things went horribly awry. The pandas began to spontaneously reproduce at an exponential rate. The result was an explosion of pandas throughout the city, wreaking havoc wherever they went. "We appear to be in the middle of a panda-emic," said Wildlife Specialist Bill Cannis.



OSA's Newest Board Member

Welcome to John Goodwin, who joined the Open Space Alliance Board of Directors in January!



John is a Highland High grad, who went on to receive degrees in economics from Southern Methodist University and the University of Washington. He fondly recalls the summer spent in Jackson Hole as a boatman and wrangler.

John worked as a financial advisor for EF Hutton, and a decade later struck out on his own as the only securities broker-dealer based in New Mexico. He merged his firm with RBC Wealth Management in 2020.

In addition to the OSA, John serves on the Boards of the Texas Methodist Foundation and Wespath Benefits & Investments. He and wife Donna have two daughters and 5 grandchildren. He enjoys playing golf and hiking in the Sandia foothills, and would like

to see more people enjoy the beautiful Albuquerque Open Spaces.

Our Memorial Bench program is finally back on line thanks, in part, to Mike Steinzig.

Mike grew up in Silver City, and studied physics at Colorado College and mechanical engineering at NMSU. Since then, he's worked in electric power generation, engineering consulting and, for the last 20 years, as an engineer at Los Alamos National Laboratory.



Mike in his workshop in Los Alamos

Mike was fortunate enough to grow up with access to tools and a need to use them, from running barbed wire fences to fixing motorcycles. Large-scale furniture became an interest when he organized a group of Los Alamos Beer Cooperative members to build patio furniture for the newly opened Bathtub Row Brewing in 2015, using trees harvested from the Pajarito Ski Hill. This "hobby" has continued with fabrication of benches for public places.

Mike lives in Los Alamos with his wife Dara and their dog Beedle.



Open Space Division staff install one of Mike’s benches

Get involved in the Open Space Alliance today and contribute to the future of YOUR Open Space!

Your generous contribution to the Open Space Alliance supports OSA’s mission of enhancing the experience of all users of Albuquerque Open Space lands by providing financial support for Open Space Division programs, advocating for sustainability and expansion, and encouraging increased public involvement and use.

To become a member, please visit us at the openspacealliance.org or fill out the form below.

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|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> RENEWAL | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 SENIOR | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 FRIEND OF OSA | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 BUSINESS |
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Open Space News

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3615 Los Picaros Rd. SE

8:00 am to 4:30 PM

Monday through Friday

(505) 768-4200

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Winter: 7:00 am to 7:00pm

Summer: 7:00 am to 9:00pm

All week

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PETROGLYPH NATIONAL MONUMENT

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\$1.00 Weekdays / \$2.00 Weekends per car

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(505) 768-4950

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